United Nations E/C.19/2009/3/Add.1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 February 2009
English
Original: Spanish

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Eighth session
New York, 18-29 May 2009
Items 3, 4 and 5 of the provisional agenda*

Follow-up to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

Human rights

Half-day discussion on the Arctic

Information received from the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations

Report of the United Nations system in Ecuador

Summary

This report has been drawn up on the basis of contributions made by the agencies of the United Nations system in Ecuador against the background of the recommendations made at the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the objectives of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. This is the fourth joint report submitted to the Permanent Forum by the United Nations agencies in Ecuador; it was prepared by the inter-agency intercultural theme group, chaired by the United Nations Population Fund in Ecuador.

* E/C.19/2009/1.

09-24462 (E) 100309 100309

I. Joint programming

1. The joint programming activities developed by the United Nations system intercultural theme group in 2008 are presented below.

2. As the lead agency in the inter-agency intercultural theme group, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) coordinated the participation of eight agencies in the United Nations system in preparing the programme entitled "Development and Cultural Diversity to reduce Poverty and promote Social Inclusion", which was submitted to the Thematic Window for Culture and Development of the United Nations Development Programme-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund. This programme was drawn up jointly with the Ministry of Coordination for Cultural and Natural Heritage, a Government body linking the five ministries connected to the main parts of the programme. The programme, which has a budget of US$ 5.5 million over a three-year period, will operate in the provinces of Chimborazo, Esmeraldas and Sucumbíos, focusing its activity on three main areas: public policies, economic undertakings and the use of statistics in decision-making.

3. The Programme for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve, implemented with the support of six United Nations agencies in Ecuador — including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) — and financed by the UNDP-Spain MDG Achievement Fund, along with the Ministry of the Environment project on protective measures for the Tagaeri and Taromenane peoples, organized a regional meeting (for the Amazon and Gran Chaco regions) involving experts from Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia to contribute to the establishment of a regional policy on peoples in voluntary isolation.

4. Intercultural issues were also promoted in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) joint programming in Ecuador for 2010-2014. UNDAF promotes intercultural issues in two ways: through specific results to be achieved by the various agencies in their country programmes, and by including intercultural matters as a cross-cutting issue throughout UNDAF. To do this, a methodology has been drawn up which includes a checklist. In addition, in the context of drawing up UNDAF, the United Nations system carried out with national counterparts a number of exchange, consultancy and validation workshops, one of which, on the issue of national identity and intercultural matters, was led by the intercultural theme group and included participation by representatives of the indigenous movement, including the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), the Indigenous Movement of Chimborazo, the Confederation of Quichua Nations of Ecuador, the Ecuadorian Indian Federation (FEI), and representatives from the Afro-Ecuadorian movement and State bodies related to intercultural issues, such as the Development Council for the Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador (CODENPE), the National Directorate for Bilingual Intercultural Education and the Intercultural Health Department of the Ministry of Public Health.

II. Missions of the United Nations Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people

5. During the November 2008 mission to Ecuador by Ms. Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, United Nations Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) facilitated a meeting with indigenous social movements in Ecuador, whose members gave the expert their views on the different social programmes initiated by the current Government, and their ideas about what the definitions of poverty and development mean in the current context. The United Nations system, the Government and the social movements are awaiting the expert's report and recommendations in order to support its implementation and/or follow-up.

6. In the context of the debate on the Constitution that was approved in September 2008, the United Nations system arranged for the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, Mr. James Anaya, to be present, in order to help Ecuadorian Assembly members better understand the scope of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. His presence was appreciated both by the authorities and members of the Assembly and by leaders of the national indigenous organizations who had bilateral meetings with him in order to discuss their concerns with regard to the proposed inclusions in the Constitution.

III. Distribution of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

7. The inter-agency intercultural theme group has published the contents of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and distributed it to various interested parties, including the leaders of indigenous organizations in Ecuador, the members of the Constituent Assembly and the media, among others. OHCHR has translated and published the Declaration in Quechua.

8. In addition, under the coordination of OHCHR, the inter-agency intercultural theme group has translated and published the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the following native languages of Ecuador: Chaa'pala, Shuar Chicham, Achuar Chicham/Shiwiar Chicham, Sápara Atupama, Wao Tededo, Awapit, Tsafiki, Bai Koka/Pai Koka, A'ingae, Sia Pedee, Andoa and Quechua.

9. Representing the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC), UNDP in Ecuador participated in the Regional Seminar for South America on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, held in Lima and also attended by a number of delegates from indigenous organizations and Ecuadorian State bodies.

10. UNDP supported the publication of several documents, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Quechua and in Spanish, and the articles of the new Constitution of Ecuador concerning indigenous peoples.

IV. The environment and community tourism

11. The Small Grants Programme has financed several projects with associations and thematic networks that are working on environmental issues with indigenous organizations.

12. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), through its Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty programme in Ecuador, has been working to strengthen community tourism in poor areas with a high potential for tourism, especially in the areas of enterprise management, commercialization and access to finance, as well as supporting the creation of the first community tourism group in Latin America, made up of 25 trainers using the methodology of the International Labour Organization Latin America Sustainable Tourism Network (ILO-Redturs). In this, UNWTO had support from and worked in conjunction with other United Nations agencies such as UNDP and ILO-Redturs.

V. Intercultural health issues

13. In the context of the efforts to establish an intercultural health model in Otavalo, UNFPA has supported the training of hospital health-care workers in Quechua in order to facilitate communication between health-care workers and the indigenous population. As part of this effort, a book of basic Quechua for health-care workers was produced, and has been adopted by the Ministry of Public Health for other operational units in the country.

14. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) have worked together with the Ministry of Health to create technical guidelines for culture-appropriate childbirth, which include care protocols and specific standards of care for childbirth that take account of culture.

15. UNFPA has supported the establishment of an intercultural health model at the public hospital in Otavalo in response to the needs and requests of indigenous women with regard to health care. The hospital has made progress in installing a delivery room designed for vertical births and training midwives who work with the hospital for example by referring pregnant women to health-care facilities and by providing care. The vertical birth room is the first in the country and serves as a model so that the Ministry of Health can extend this service to other provinces. It is hoped that this strategy will diminish cultural barriers and decrease mother and child morbidity and mortality rates, which will contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

16. Strengthening the Free Maternity and Child Care Act beneficiaries' committees by placing emphasis on indigenous women in the Amazon region of Ecuador is a UNFPA priority that has achieved significant results by improving the access of indigenous women to health-care services, facilitating emergency transport, providing information about the benefits of the Act, monitoring the quality of health-care services and bringing service providers closer to the users of those services. This is an exercise in empowering indigenous women as a strategy for achieving their rights.

VI. Indigenous languages

17. The ninth International Mother Language Day was celebrated on 21 February 2008. International Mother Language Day was a particularly appropriate occasion to recall a number of fundamental issues. Languages are an integral part of identity for indigenous people and peoples, essential to their peaceful coexistence, and a strategic factor in any progress towards sustainable development and fostering harmonious links between global and local issues.

VII. Disaggregating data and statistics

18. UNFPA supported the establishment of the National Commission on Statistics for Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Peoples, whose mission is to harmonize and agree on quantitative and qualitative information about indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples, and to approve the methods for calculating socio-demographic indicators. It is a technical body with participation from the National Statistics and Census Institute, CODENPE, the Afro-Ecuadorian Development Corporation (CODAE), and representatives of national organizations of indigenous peoples. The Commission is preparing for the 2011 census in order to ensure that indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples participate in the preparatory process and in the census itself.

VIII. Indigenous women

19. UNIFEM has held a regional event attended by 213 indigenous peoples in the region to discuss indigenous women's access to indigenous traditional justice. The event took place within the framework of the regional programme on the topic of "Working to combat ethnic and racial discrimination through the effective implementation of the rights of Latin American indigenous women", and had the support of the United Nations system inter-agency gender and intercultural theme groups. It was attended by women from Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Mexico.

20. UNFPA has supported, through regional funds, the strengthening of a national network of indigenous women which, in addition to reinforcing the CONAIE Office for Women and Families, is linked to the Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas, Región Sur. Alongside the development of this network, an agenda for indigenous women is being drawn up, including five priority areas of action: land and territories, participation in politics, sexual and reproductive rights and gender-based violence, economic rights, and culture and development.

IX. Achievements and challenges

21. One of the greatest achievements in Ecuador is that the rights of indigenous peoples have been recognized in the new Constitution, which recognizes the international instruments regarding indigenous peoples as binding.

22. The country's challenges include strengthening the institutions of the State, incorporating an intercultural focus in public policies, and obtaining access to the

resources necessary for the implementation of national programmes in the context of the international crisis that is affecting Ecuador's internal situation.

23. Another significant challenge for the country is to manage the conflict between the mining of natural resources and the rights of the indigenous peoples (which include the rights to consultation and participation, the right to their territories and the right to define their development priorities). For example, the draft mining law that is currently being discussed has created unrest among the indigenous peoples, who claim that it infringes on their rights to water, to land and to live in a healthy environment.

24. As members of the United Nations system, it is our challenge to implement the programme of Development and Cultural Diversity to reduce Poverty and promote Social Inclusion, which will test the ability of each agency, and the system as a whole, to implement a coherent programme to benefit indigenous peoples and achieve specific results.